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organized farmers. It has enabled poor cultivators to escape from the clutches of the usurer by obtaining for the individual the benefit of the credit of the association. All these results have been produced on a scale which hardly justifies us in asserting that we have passed beyond the experimental stage. But the experiments have been tried under the most varying conditions, and their uniform success indicates that they are the foundation of an economic revolution in Ireland of the most far reaching character.

Those who have taken up the movement—who have put into practice the principles of co-operation which the original society preaches—have learned to look upon the business of their lives from a new standpoint. They analyse the conditions with which they have to deal, and see that the Irish farmer, confronted with a world-wide competition, has only one advantage left to him over his competitors, viz., nearness to market. Of this advantage he has been deprived by his failure to organize his production and distribution as his continental neighbors have done. He sees, none too soon, that his failure to understand and adopt co-operation has resulted in his remaining as much behind the age as an individual as he is out of date collectively. He has made but little advance in his knowledge or in his methods. Science has not come on to his farm, and he is only now raising himself by the efforts to which the Organization Society is rousing him out of a veritable Slough of Despond. Already the eagerness for information, the readiness to apply it to practical ends, and the social machinery through which it can be so applied, are manifesting themselves as the first fruits of the organization movement, and point to better things.

So far we may congratulate ourselves that we are entering with spirit into the competition of the age. We are determined to rely mainly upon the resources of self help. But, in order to compete on even terms with foreign producers, we need to have our voluntary efforts supplemented with a reasonable measure of State aid. The report of the Recess Committee, which attracted more interest in America than among our own legislators, which even found an honored place in the Annual Report of the United States Minister of Agriculture, defined the narrow limits of the required assistance. Those responsible for the Irish Government would have acceded to this request from Irishmen of all parties, and they even introduced in the spring of 1897 a measure to give effect to these recommendations. But it was not seriously promoted in Parliament, and now our highest hopes are that our urgent needs for that technical education and information which the Government alone can supply will be favorably considered by the Parliament of 1899. If we are again disappointed, I feel confident that, before the century is out, the Irish "Grange" will be powerful enough politically to compel legislative and administrative attention to the needs of the Irish agriculturalist.

Such briefly is the position of organized self help and Government assistance in the Emerald Isle.

HORACE PLUNKETT.

CABLE CUTTING IN WAR.

WHEN the Atlantic cable was first successfully laid and operated, an exchange of congratulations between the Queen of England and the President of the United States was telegraphed under the seas, and President

Buchanan in his message used these significant words: "In this view, will not all nations of Christendom spontaneously unite in the declaration that it shall be forever neutral, and that its communications shall be held sacred in passing to their places of destination, even in the midst of hostilities?"

Thus, the first long submarine cable was barely put in good working order before speculation was rife as to the ultimate effect of this new agent upon the wars of the future. A new, and probably dangerous, element was introduced into the naval problem, that was already difficult enough to solve, and England, in particular, as the chief shipping and naval country of the world, recognized the value and importance of the cable as a powerful engine for war, as well as the greatest nineteenth century civilizing agent. Constructed in the interests of peace and commerce, the cable nevertheless became a formidable friend or enemy in times of war. The nation which controlled the cables would hold the key to the whole situation, and it was reasoned by those in power that the isolation of a nation by cutting or holding the cables would be a blow to an enemy equal to the defeat of a whole fleet of armor clads.

Although not a cable-laying nation, and with a strangely apathetic policy toward projecting new lines of submarine telegraph in the past, our war with Spain has demonstrated that the Washington authorities were keenly alive to the importance of cutting or controlling the cables connecting Cuba with Spain. Of the many naval problems which this modern war is expected to solve, that of testing the relative value of cables in deciding the fate of combatants is not the least. The isolation of Cuba from Spain was one of the first steps undertaken by our naval authorities, and the success of the work has demonstrated its feasibility.

From a strategic point of view, the cables are therefore of inestimable value, and if earlier in the conflict the United States had severed all communication between the blockaded island and the mother country the war would have in all probability been shortened. A nation shut off from communication with the rest of the world is effectively blockaded, but, so long as cable messages can be transmitted back and forth, the most rigid blockade of ships is somewhat doubtful in obtaining the desired results. Uncertainty is an evil that works insidious harm, and an isolated nation is weakened by being cut off from its fleet or army operating in distant fields.

In April of 1884 there was held in Paris a "Convention for the Protection of Submarine Telegraph Cables," as it was called, and all of the great powers were represented; but the result of this convention's whole work was of little real value except for the agreement to protect the cables in times of peace. In fact there was displayed a decided tendency to restrict any interference on the part of a nation at war with another from cutting the cables to facilitate naval or military operations. By the adoption of Article XV., the convention put itself upon record as refusing to interfere with the rights of belligerents. The article in question reads: "It is understood that the stipulations of the present convention do not in any way restrict the freedom of action of the belligerents."

There is little doubt but this is the true expression of opinion of most of the great powers, and there would be greater difficulty in securing an agreement among the nations of the world to regard cables as neutral in times of war than in obtaining signers to the Treaty of Paris, in 1856, abolishing privateering. In view of her world-wide control of the cables, England would reap the greatest benefit from such a treaty among the European

nations, and it is just her supremacy on the high seas and her control of the cables that would make the other powers refuse to subscribe to any such agreement.

Cable cutting for war purposes has never figured greatly in modern conflicts, but this has been due to the fact that the need has not yet been felt. Practical experience in this line may be said to begin with the present war between Spain and the United States. In the war between Peru and Chile, cables were freely cut along the coast of South America, and the effect this produced on the course of the war was important. When England bombarded Alexandria, the lines were cut by Arabi's troops which crossed Egypt and formed the principal means of communication with India, China and Australasia. But this was of little moment, as there was another line for sending communications through Persia and Russia.

Since the bombardment of Alexandria, England has constructed a ring of cables around Africa, America, and India, and she is much better prepared to keep in communication with her fleets and colonies scattered all over the world than ever before. England's policy of building and controlling cable lines has been co-extensive with her work of constructing docks, repair shops, and coaling stations in all parts of the world. In fact, the latter necessitates the former. Without the use of the cables to communicate with her outlying provinces, and to direct her fleets, her extensive coaling and naval stations would lose half their value. Once isolated from the rest of the world by the cutting of her cables in times of war, England's vast navy would be crippled beyond ordinary conception.

But the interesting question that is receiving special attention now is, How could she protect the cables from the enemy's fleets? The present war has demonstrated the practical ease with which cable-cutting plants can be fitted out, and also the effective work that can be accomplished in cutting cables even under the very guns of the enemy. Admiral Dewey's fleet had little difficulty in picking up the cable at Manila and cutting off all direct communication with the rest of the world. Similarly, the cable cutting ships sent down to Cuba performed their work with comparative ease, and without loss of life. England to day owns thousands of miles of submarine cables, and in the event of hostilities breaking out it would be quite essential that she should protect these to conduct the war successfully.

Sir Charles Dilke, an authority on such matters, has publicly declared that all the British cables following the trade routes would be patrolled by war vessels, and thus be protected from the enemy's cable cutting ships. But the stupendous size of such an undertaking in times of war may not have been carefully considered. Unless engaged in a war with a far inferior power, a nation is apt to require most of her warships for fighting purposes, and it would be no easy matter for even Great Britain to find a sufficient number of cruisers to patrol the lines of her principal cables without seriously weakening the fighting squadrons. Moreover, a swift cable-cutting ship, such as our converted cruiser "St. Paul," could easily slip behind a patrolling cruiser at night, and grapple for a cable. Most of the Atlantic cables which cross from America to England reach the latter country by way of the English Channel, and at this point they lie in water varying from 40 to 100 fathoms, a depth which seems to invite cable cutting from the enemy at the first outbreak of hostilities.

While not owning or operating any of the great submarine cables, the United States Government has such an extensive seacoast that great

quantities of subaqueous cables, crossing rivers, lakes, bays, and other small bodies of water, have been laid by it to connect forts, telegraph stations, and other important places. The demand for these small cables by both the Government and the Western Union Telegraph Company has been so large that cable making plants have grown up in this country, and they have the necessary appliances for manufacturing all except large ocean cables. Two or three firms are capable of turning out a mile of subaqueous cable in a week.

Naturally, cable laying ships, and all modern scientific equipments, have been constructed on a proportionate scale. Had no such industry been in existence in this country at the outbreak of the war, it might have required considerable time and money to manufacture or import the apparatus necessary for grappling and cutting cables, and for splicing and laying them to new points. Cable laying, cutting and splicing represent a special branch of science, and engineers have to be trained for this work as for any other. A cable laying ship must have all the facilities for splicing in mid-ocean, and for grappling for broken ends at any reasonable depth. The cost of a complete outfit runs up into hundreds of thousands of dollars. England has cable making plants and cable laying ships that represent a single investment of five million dollars.

But this is merely a natural consequence of her policy of cable laying. In her international system she operates fourteen long ocean cables, nine of which belong exclusively to her; in her home system she owns 102 separate lines; ninety-three in her Indian system and nearly fifty more in Canada, Australia and her other colonies. These aggregate an enormous mileage of cables that must be protected in a war period; but, as many of them could be abandoned without interfering materially with direct communication with her colonies, no attempt would probably be made to patrol the full list.

The other countries of Europe own or control a number of cables, which in the event of a war would either seriously handicap them by the necessity of patrolling them, or would afford a strategic advantage over the enemy that might decide the issue. Norway, for instance, owns 225 official cables, but as they merely cross bays and rivers along her rugged coast, and are mostly short ones, they would not be of so much importance to the country in times of hostilities. France on the other hand operates fifty-two separate ocean cables, some of them being the most important in the world, and she would find it a stupendous undertaking to control them in a war with England, the United States or any of the European first-class powers. She would require a good sized fleet of cruisers to patrol the cables and keep the government in communication with her outlying colonies.

Germany operates 45 cables of more or less importance, and Italy claims ownership to 38, mostly of little international value. Spain has a part ownership in nine, Russia eight, and Brazil twenty-two. All of the other countries possess exclusive or part ownership over a few minor cables along their coasts or inland bodies of water.

The strategic value of controlling the cables in a war has been fully demonstrated in the present conflict, but it has not been made equally clear whether costly ownership of such cables at the beginning of hostilities is of any particular advantage. It is said that England could isolate many countries by seizing the cables at one end; but it is equally true that an enemy with a good fleet of cable-cutting ships could soon isolate England from her colonies. Owing to the great number of her cables

in all parts of the world, it would take some time to do this, but the work could be accomplished in due time by an energetic enemy.

Distant colonies and coaling stations require ownership of cables, and if the United States Government decides to hold the Philippines it must be only a question of time before it will become imperative upon her to construct a cable there *via* Hawaii. Already the question of building a cable to the latter country has been agitated so generally that it is more than likely that either our government or American capitalists will eventually construct one: A Pacific Coast cable connecting our country with China and Japan is felt in many quarters to be only a question of time. The present war will probably expedite plans for building it. British capitalists stand ready to construct such a cable, and it is only the practical prohibition of the United States toward such a British scheme that holds the matter in check for the time being.

GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH.

DANGER OF POLITICAL APATHY.

GOOD citizenship requires that we devote much attention to public affairs. It is the only way in which we can hope to conserve our liberties, protect our families, and perpetuate free government. No man can be a good citizen in theory alone. Citizenship demands action. It has to deal with conditions. A man may profess much love and admiration for our federal union, our institutional politics, our bicameral legislature, our independent judiciary, or the many other distinguishing parts of our system, but if he fail in actively supporting them, both by word and deed, he is but a sojourner here—not a citizen.

The support of government consists not alone in the payment of taxes. Money never made a free state, nor has it ever maintained one. Wealth may free us from the worry of many temporal concerns, but it cannot sever us from society and those social institutions which form the basis of all liberty, happiness and financial security.

A great many men of wealth display no personal activity in politics. The cares of business engross their whole attention. They seldom attend their party primaries, and many do not vote; they are citizens by proxy. When they desire the accomplishment of any political purpose, however good, a professional politician or lobbyist is employed to do the work for them, while they go on making money. Lord Bacon truly says that gold has sold more men than it has ever bought.

The greater portion of our recent political ills, and particularly the enormous corruption and dishonesty which seem now to pervade legislation and politics in general, may be directly ascribed to the fact of so considerable a number of our *quasi*-citizens remaining aloof from politics. Some of them seem to merit the remark of Thomas Jefferson, that "merchants have no country. The spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains." Aristotle says that commerce "is incompatible with that dignified life which it is our wish that our citizens should lead, and totally adverse to that generous elevation of mind with which it is our ambition to inspire them." It is unfortunately true that men in mercantile pursuits are too apt to measure all things by standards of pecuniary value. Their mode of life will naturally induce this habit of mind, unless precaution is used to guard against it. There is